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ORIGINAL

Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Revision of the Commission's Rules to Ensure	)	**CC Docket No. 94-102**
Compatibility with Enhanced 911 Emergency	)	
Calling Systems	)	

To : The Commission

RESPONSE OF TRUEPOSITION, INC.
TO CTIA's PETITION FOR RECONSIDERATION

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Dated: March 18, 1998

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To : The Commission

RESPONSE OF TRUEPOSITION, INC. TO CTIA's PETITION FOR RECONSIDERATION

TruePosition, Inc. ("TruePosition") hereby submits this response supporting in part and opposing in part the February 17, 1998 Petition for Reconsideration and Clarification (the "Petition") filed by the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association ("CTIA") in the above-captioned proceeding.

SUMMARY

TruePosition's automatic location identification ("ALI") technology is designed to enable commercial mobile radio service ("CMRS") providers to determine the location of mobile wireless telephones. By using advanced, time difference of arrival ("TDOA") technology, TruePosition determines the location of a designated mobile wireless telephone or transmitter and forwards this information in real time to application software that transmits the location information to Public Safety Answering Points ("PSAPs"). Moreover, TruePosition can accomplish this now – well prior

to the Phase II implementation deadline.[1] Therefore, TruePosition agrees with CTIA that the Commission need not and should not delay Phase II Implementation of its E911 rules since network-based technologies already enable CMRS carriers to comply with the existing rules for the vast majority of CMRS users. Moreover, TruePosition supports CTIA's efforts to ensure limitations on carriers' liability for E911 calls and agrees that 9-1-1 should be a universally available, nationwide emergency number.

Nevertheless, the Commission must resist any efforts that would unnecessarily stall ALI implementation for at least 50 million and potentially more than 100 million CMRS users. Specifically, conducting a proceeding to "clarify" Phase II ALI requirements on the assumption that handset-based proponents can eventually implement, standardize and commercialize their product will lend uncertainty to the E911 implementation process while carriers await the final outcome, thereby delaying the provision of ALI services to the public.[2] This would contravene the Commission's goal of facilitating ALI deployment prior to the October 1, 2001 deadline. In fact, excusing carriers who use handset-based ALI technology from providing ALI to pre-existing mobile subscribers would create a nation of "haves" and "have-nots," whereby

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1 TruePosition's technology already is available on a commercial basis for analog cellular systems. Digital technology solutions will be commercially available starting later this year.

2 As described further below, these technologies also require changes to the wireless network and are therefore a *hybrid* of both handset- and network-based technologies rather than solely handset-based. *See infra* note 24.

only those subscribers who purchase or can afford to purchase new ALI-capable phones could benefit from the Commission's rules. Finally, an inquiry would be premature given that neither CTIA nor any other parties have demonstrated any specific developments in handset-based ALI technologies that suggest such solutions could even come close to complying with the E911 rules by the Phase II deadline.

I. TruePosition Supports Certain CTIA Proposals to Enhance E911 Implementation.

TruePosition supports certain of CTIA's proposals that would enhance E911 implementation such as ensuring limited liability for CMRS carriers and promoting designation of "9-1-1" as a nationwide emergency number.[3] More importantly, TruePosition supports CTIA's central tenet that the Commission should not delay Phase II implementation for CMRS users.

Every year approximately 95 million 9-1-1 calls are made nationwide and in 1997, approximately 30 million emergency wireless calls were placed to 9-1-1.[4] These facts prove that nationwide both wireline and wireless customers recognize and rely on "9-1-1" to provide a communications link to emergency services. For these

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[3] *See* CTIA Petition at 3-8 and 10-16.

[4] *See* "9-1-1 Calls from Wireless Phones Continue to Increase," CTIA Press Releases, February 24, 1998. *See also Revision of the Commission's Rules to Ensure Compatibility with Enhanced 911 Emergency Calling Systems*, CC Docket No. 94-102, *Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, 11 FCC Rcd 18676, 18679 at ¶ 3 (1996) ("*First Report & Order*").

reasons, TruePosition agrees that the Commission cannot delay implementation of ALI and agrees that 9-1-1 should be a universally available, nationwide emergency number.

Similarly, TruePosition supports CTIA's proposal that the Commission resolve carrier liability issues through traditional common carrier methods.[5] Specifically, the Commission should allow CMRS carriers to insulate themselves from liability to non-validated users by permitting them to file federal tariffs. As BellSouth Corporation stated in its petition, tariffs will allow carriers to establish binding terms for the provision of E911 services to non-subscribers similar to those that can be contained in subscriber contracts.[6]

The Commission established its Phase II E911 rules to promote public safety by ensuring the availability of location technology to assist CMRS 9-1-1 callers. E911 was not designed for carriers to indemnify CMRS users for problems that are inherent in radio transmission and limitations on antenna site availability. Indeed, the Commission has recognized that call completion depends "on the vagaries of radio transmission."[7] The failure to authorize a tariff system would expose carriers to

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5 *See* CTIA Petition at 6-10.

6 *See* BellSouth Corporation Petition for Reconsideration at 5 (February 17, 1998).

7 *See Revision of the Commission's Rules to Ensure Compatibility with Enhanced 911 Emergency Calling Systems,* CC Docket No. 94-102 , *Memorandum Opinion & Order* at ¶ 32 (December 23, 1997) ("*Memorandum Opinion*

(continued...)

unlimited tort liability from CMRS users who are subject to those "vagaries," but who have no contractual relationship with the carrier and who otherwise have no notice of the carrier's E911 service limitations. The Commission should not subject CMRS carriers to unfounded litigation by CMRS users that would result in increased costs to carriers and ultimately to consumers. Instead, the Commission should authorize covered CMRS carriers to file federal tariffs that would provide the terms and conditions of a carrier's liability.

II. The Commission Should Maintain Phase II Requirements for All ALI Technologies.

TruePosition disagrees, however, that the Commission should clarify or consider modifying Phase II E911 requirements with regard to potential handset-based ALI solutions. For instance, contrary to the commenter cited by CTIA, ALI handset-based technologies should not be exempt from providing ALI to preexisting CMRS phones.[8] In fact, the Commission has consistently refused to adopt separate, technology-specific ALI requirements and CTIA has offered no rationale for doing so now.

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7 (...continued)
& Order").

8 *See* CTIA Petition at 23-24; *see also Memorandum Opinion & Order* at ¶ 124, n.319.

Most importantly, the Commission must eliminate any uncertainty or doubt created by its suggestion in the *Memorandum Opinion & Order* that it would consider proposals to further improve ALI capabilities.[9] The failure to do so would create disincentives for near-term carrier implementation of Phase II. For example, in its December *Order* the Commission reiterated it was "not necessary to delay the October 1, 2001 implementation schedule."[10] But CTIA appears to have misinterpreted one minor paragraph in the Commission's order and misperceived the Commission's willingness to consider proposals for future ALI technologies. Therefore, the Commission should reemphasize that it will consider such proposals only upon a clear demonstration of the technology's readiness and compliance with the Commission's rules, "rather than [parties] asking for delay so far in advance."[11]

As discussed below, if the Commission were to consider separate handset-based and network-based implementation requirements it would undermine several years of technological development and testing of existing ALI solutions. Rather, the Commission should maintain its technological neutrality, uphold its Phase II requirements and implementation deadline for *all* ALI solutions, and continue to encourage the implementation of E911 ALI technology. In fact, Chairman Kennard

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9 *See Memorandum Opinion & Order* at ¶ 124.

10 *See id.* at ¶ 121.

11 *See id.* at ¶ 122.

has encouraged CMRS carriers to implement E911 ALI technology *before* the 2001 deadline.[12] If the Commission were now to debate modifying ALI rules for handset-based technologies, it would negate any chance of early ALI implementation. Accordingly, the Commission should dismiss CTIA's request since it would effectively delay the availability and deployment of ALI to 50 million to 100 million existing and future CMRS users.

A. ALI Should Be Available to All CMRS Users.

Since the E911 proceedings began in 1994, the Commission has unequivocally stated that all ALI providers must adhere to the same implementation rules and, whatever methodology a CMRS carrier chooses, it should be equally available to all CMRS users, not just those willing and able to purchase "next generation" handsets. The Commission has now *twice* found this neutrality standard in the public interest and repeatedly stated in its *Memorandum Opinion & Order* that it will not entertain exceptions to benefit any particular technology.[13] Accordingly, it must now clarify the record for CTIA and others who may have misperceived the Commis-

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12 *See* William E. Kennard, *Speech to Wireless 98,* Atlanta, Georgia, February 23, 1998 <http://www.fcc.gov/Speeches/Kennard/spwek805.html> ("Kennard speech"). Currently, only network-based ALI solutions will allow the majority of CMRS users to access E911 ALI services prior to October 2001.

13 *See Memorandum Opinion & Order* at ¶ 123.

sion's willingness to consider specific proposals based upon specific ALI capabilities as a willingness to revisit its E911 rules generally or to create a broad waiver policy.

While contending that the development of handset-based technologies has advanced significantly, CTIA concedes that such technologies will not, even when available, extend to pre-existing CMRS phones. Accordingly, it asks for "clarification" regarding the terms under which such non-compliant technologies could satisfy carrier obligations and meet the Commission's mandate. In other words, nearly two years after the Commission set the ALI finish line and challenged both network-based and handset-based technology providers to reach it, CTIA seeks to change the rules to benefit one technology (handset-based solutions) that will likely be unable to carry the load. Yet excusing handset-based ALI technologies such as GPS from pre-2001 phones would jeopardize the Commission's goals and significantly harm public safety.

Currently, more than 50 million mobile phones are in use.[14] If the Commission were to require Phase II capabilities only on phones introduced after October 2001, as many as 100 million CMRS users will be deprived of the public safety benefits of E911 location technology. Given the rapid growth of cellular subscribers and the more recent deployment of advanced digital wireless handsets, by

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[14] *See* "Wireless Phone Companies Hit 50 million U.S. Subscribers This Week," CTIA Press Releases, July 27, 1997.

2001 there may be more than 100 million CMRS subscribers in the U.S.[15] CTIA's proposal, however, would undermine the Commission's competitive neutrality by requiring all these CMRS users to purchase new ALI-capable phones in 2001 to access ALI services. Meanwhile, CMRS users who did not or could not purchase the "new" ALI handsets would be deprived of ALI's public safety benefits, thereby creating a world of "haves" and "have-nots." Such a discrepancy would contradict the Commission's stated policies, especially considering that CMRS providers have had "sufficient notice to prepare for the implementation of the E911 features since 1993."[16]

Thus, notwithstanding the Commission's promise that ALI would provide additional safety for *all* CMRS users, CTIA would bestow a *privilege* of safety only to a fraction of the U.S. population that purchases or can afford to purchase ALI-capable phones after October 2001. In contrast, network-based ALI technologies are currently commercially available for the vast majority of CMRS

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15 From 1994 to 1995, the number of cellular customers rose by 40%. *See* "CTIA's Newest Report Shows 40 Percent Customer Growth," Radio Communications Report, March 25, 1996. In fact, one study estimates wireless growth rates at 15 to 20% through the beginning of the next century. *Paul Kagan Associates* 1997.

16 *See Memorandum Opinion and Order* at ¶ 121. In addition to increasing subscriber costs for the purchasing of handsets, GPS and other handset-based ALI solutions also necessitate standardization and universal implementation of costly network modifications that could further hamper the ability to bring handset-based ALI technologies to commercial viability. *See infra* Part II.C.

phones.[17] CTIA's request would therefore unnecessarily stall the universal deployment and availability of ALI to 50 million to 100 million existing and future CMRS users. It would take at least several years -- beginning from a time *after* handset-based ALI technologies are perfected, standardized, commercialized, and then placed into full-scale production -- to convert upwards of 100 million CMRS users to new ALI-capable handsets, even assuming all such users were willing and able to purchase the new phones. Such delays would entail immeasurable public safety costs in the form of inefficient resource management by public safety organizations forced into search and rescue operations without the benefit of CMRS-based location technologies. Also slower rescue times will undercut the ability of medical professionals to access trauma victims during the "golden hour" after injury, and undoubtedly increase the loss of human life.[18]

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[17] In addition to TruePosition, other companies, such as Sigma One, US Wireless, AccuCom and KSI, Inc. claim to have developed network-based ALI systems that can be deployed and made operable for analog CMRS phones long before the October 1, 2001 deadline. In addition, starting this year, network-based systems will begin introducing ALI technology for digital CMRS phones. Thus, carriers using a network-based ALI system could deploy E911 ALI technology nationwide for all existing and future CMRS users prior to the 2001 deadline.

[18] See attached articles illustrating the number of hours rescue workers expend locating wireless 9-1-1 callers where ALI technology is not available.

B. Special Rules for Handset-Based ALI Solutions Would Be Contrary to the Public Interest.

As early as 1993, the Commission determined that ALI technology would greatly benefit the public interest by providing wireless 9-1-1 callers access to the same services as wireline 9-1-1 callers.[19] Since 1994, various parties have attempted to delay implementation of E911 services based on both technical and economic arguments.[20] Yet throughout this proceeding the Commission has maintained that it will not further jeopardize public safety by extending the deadline or by delaying the deployment of ALI technology. To spur investment in and development of competing ALI technologies, the Commission has remained technologically neutral.

The Commission should not now, at the eleventh hour, consider altering its E911 Phase II requirements to accommodate technological solutions that are not yet available or that are not expected to meet the Phase II substantive requirements.[21] To do so would undermine the public safety benefits of E911 services to

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19 *See Amendment of the Commission's Rules to Establish New Personal Communication Services,* GEN Docket No. 90-314, *Second Report and Order*, 8 FCC Rcd 7700, 7756 at ¶ 139 (1993).

20 Indeed, during a speech at the 1998 CTIA convention in Atlanta the President of SnapTrack, a developer of GPS hybrid handset- and network-based technologies, asserted that paragraph 124 of the *Memorandum Opinion & Order* was evidence of the Commission's willingness to change the Phase II implementation rules.

21 Indeed, if these technologies were workable, by definition they would comply with the rules as written. Anticipating that this will never be the case for handset-based technologies, CTIA has made a pre-emptive strike on the ultimate application of these rules to GPS and any other similar technologies.

(continued...)

CMRS users and detract from the effective ALI technologies available through network-based solutions. It would also undermine future investment in ALI technologies because companies could not rely on continued Commission assurances of technological neutrality.

To date TruePosition and more than a dozen other companies have invested millions of dollars in product development and systems testing to meet the mandated Phase II requirements announced nearly two years ago. Having encouraged this investment and development, it would be short-sighted for the Commission to modify its E911 implementation rules on a faint promise that handset-based technologies might be available for select phones at some indeterminable time in the future. Indeed, just as Chairman Kennard recognized that consumers take CMRS providers "at their word" to provide a safety service, these entrepreneurs have taken the Commission at its word that it will remain technologically neutral.[22] It would be arbitrary and capricious for the Commission now to waive or modify carriers' obligations when there are technologies in place to comply with the existing rules. Accordingly, the Commission must stay the course and maintain its deadlines and universality of coverage for all CMRS subscribers.

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21 (...continued)
This pre-emptive strike amounts to an advance waiver request which, if granted, would lead to a flood of similar requests to the Commission.

22 *See* Kennard Speech at 3.

C. Proceedings to Adopt Necessary Standards for Handset-Based Technologies Will Delay ALI Availability.

In its Petition, CTIA asserts that handset-based solutions "cannot be implemented consistent with a 'flash-cut' transition."[23] CTIA is absolutely correct. With or without Commission intervention, given the time required for development, standardization, production and deployment, handset-based ALI technologies will not satisfy the Commission's terms for Phase II implementation.[24]

As an example, in order for GPS-based ALI to function, manufacturers must design new handsets to accommodate GPS receivers. To date, however, although there are at least three companies working on GPS-related projects, manufacturers have not designed fully functional, commercially available GPS technology that can identify the location of a wireless 9-1-1 caller within the 125 meter RMS requirement. Moreover, in order to create a seamless GPS ALI system that would meet the Phase II requirements, scores of CMRS carriers and equipment vendors would have to implement the same proprietary GPS solution.[25] Since several

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[23] *See* CTIA Petition at 23.

[24] Although CTIA refers to "handset-based technologies," these technologies are actually hybrids involving changes to the network as well as handsets. There are no practical handset-only location technologies because of the power requirements, data acquisition times, size, and GPS satellite signal blockage. Proprietary techniques are being designed to overcome these problems. These proprietary techniques involve changes to both handsets and the networks that augment the data that handsets receive from the GPS satellites.

[25] An advantage of terrestrial-based solutions is that they do not require uniform (continued...)

companies are currently designing GPS receivers using at least three different techniques of handset- and network-based modifications, a handset that uses network augmentation data in one wireless system to fix its position most likely would be unable to receive a different type of augmentation data in another system.

Thus, carriers could not meet the Commission's accuracy requirements for handsets designed for a different type of augmentation data. Selection of handset and network standards for all CMRS systems, either by the Commission or the industry, would be needed to assure that a wireless 9-1-1 caller can be located anywhere while roaming throughout the country. Yet, the laborious procedures for adopting such standards and the fact that none of the handset-based systems are yet fully developed would effectively prolong implementation of Phase II ALI technology well beyond the October 2001 deadline, not to mention potentially involve the Commission in battles that would test its technological neutrality.

III. Conclusion

In its *Memorandum Opinion & Order* the Commission emphasized that reconsideration must generally rely on facts not previously presented rather than reiterating arguments made prior to the Commission's final action.[26] Although CTIA

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[25] (...continued)
technology or new handsets in order to locate wireless 9-1-1 callers. Thus, carriers in adjoining geographical markets, or even the same market, have the latitude to choose and implement one of several different terrestrial technologies that best accommodates its wireless network.

[26] *See Memorandum Opinion & Order* at ¶ 117; *see also* 47 C.F.R. §1.429 (b).

makes several useful suggestions with respect to making E911 more effective, however with respect to its proposed proceedings for handset-based technologies, it has failed to present any new facts. Rather it seeks guidelines for technologies that it assumes will fail to meet the Commission's mandate as currently stated.

The Commission adopted the E911 rules nearly two years ago. To the extent that proponents of handset-based solutions would seek to modify the Commission's rules four years after the process began these proponents should be required to present not only new facts that warrant reconsideration, but also to specify their technologies' capabilities. In addition, these proponents of handset-based technologies should demonstrate how their technology would serve the estimated 100 million CMRS users that will have purchased phones before the October 1, 2001 deadline. Again, while TruePosition supports CTIA's efforts to enhance E911 implementation, it must oppose any proposal that would exclude more than 100 million CMRS users from the safety benefits of ALI. Therefore, CTIA's request to explore alternative obligations for such technologies should be denied.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: _____

Dated: March 18, 1998

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Julie Tran, hereby certify that on this 18th day of March, 1998, true and correct copies of the foregoing "Response of TruePosition to CTIA's Petition for Reconsideration" in CC Docket No. 94-102 were served by hand delivery or by First Class mail*, postage prepaid, on the following parties:

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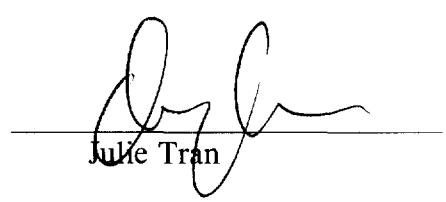

Julie Tran

Wireless Enhanced 9•1•1

Nashville Dispatchers Go 'Way Beyond Duty'

By Lynn M. Casey
Metro Nashville (Tennessee) Police Department
Communications Supervisor

IT seems lately everyone in the 9-1-1 industry is consumed with wireless issues. It has become a politically hot issue instead of a consumer safety issue. The opinions vary as much as the many different types of emergencies.

As a front-line supervisor, my major concern is that it works when we need it to. When there is an emergency, I want the correct information available to us, no matter who is calling or how.

I'm reminded of all the calls for help during the years when our agency/county did not have enhanced 9-1-1. I remember the countless times when having ANI/ALI information meant the difference in life or death.

With wireless issues before us, it would seem we have reverted back to the old ways. It is my hope all this confusion will be behind us soon.

The following story should remind us all why we work in emergency services and how important knowing a location is. On May 4, shortly after midnight, a panicked call for help came into the Davidson County (Tennessee) 9-1-1 Center.

A very frightened man who was in obvious pain began to tell how he had been run over by a train and that his leg had been cut off. He immediately was connected with the fire department to get medical help.

When both call-takers attempted to get a location on the man, he didn't know where he was. Enhanced 9-1-1 features were of no help this time because he had called from a cellular phone – a phone that was not even his, but one a buddy had loaned him.

In an attempt to get as much information as possible and to keep the man on the phone, the call-takers learned the caller was 18-year-old Eric Sakeria, who had arrived in Nashville about 3 p.m. that day. He had just gotten out of boot camp in Hawaii and was due to report to Fort Campbell Army Base in Kentucky later that morning. He had been walking for hours and had gotten tired and hopelessly lost.

He came upon some railroad tracks and decided to hop a northbound train in hopes it would get him closer to Fort Campbell. He slipped and fell, and the train ran over his leg. In pain and shock, Eric managed to crawl off the tracks and tried to pull himself up an embankment but didn't have enough strength. Realizing he desperately needed help, Eric dialed 9-1-1.

What followed was a 28-minute race with death. Both employees kept Eric on the line and continued to ask him questions in an attempt to gather clues as to his whereabouts. Eric remembered a street sign that he thought was in the area.

Officers were dispatched to that area. An all-points bulletin was broadcast over the police radio to alert officers to begin searching railroad tracks throughout the city.

Eric could see a sign with a company name on it. Unfortunately, it wasn't a company in the Nashville area. We later would find out it was the side of a parked tractor trailer he was seeing.

Other employees began to search maps and one called the railroad dispatcher in an attempt to find what route trains had taken through Nashville in the last few minutes.

A loud rattling noise began over the phone. Eric had begun to shake from hypothermia and shock. It sounded like the cell phone was knocking against the railroad tracks. At one point, Eric heard a siren. That was a short-lived sense of relief. The siren stopped and because so many different officers had been using their emergency equipment, there was no way to tell which one he had heard.

As a front-line supervisor, my major concern is that it works when we need it to. When there is an emergency, I want the correct information available to us, no matter who is calling or how ... With wireless issues before us, it would seem we have reverted back to the old ways. It is my hope all this confusion will be behind us soon.

Both call-takers continued to talk to Eric and to reassure him we were trying to find him. Almost 20 minutes after he had dialed 9-1-1, Eric heard another siren very close by. Officers were told to turn off all sirens and then systematically turn them off and on to see which officer's siren he had heard.

K-9 Officer Mel Pendley was the one. He and Officer Frank Ragans both got out on foot and began to walk the railroad track at Spence Lane and Lebanon Road from different directions.

Eric could see their flashlights in the distance. He was told to yell at them to get their attention. Both call-takers were excitedly relaying to other employees that he could see the officers' flashlights and was yelling to them. The excitement and relief was palpable.

Officer Pendley picked up the cell phone and began to tell where they were when the line went dead. He called back on 9-1-1 to give a better location so the paramedics could get to them easier. The cell phone battery soon gave out.

It took 28 minutes to find Eric Sakeria. He was critically injured and close to death from shock and hypothermia along with his other injuries.

He's alive today because Lisa Huey and Debbie Edwards took him seriously and never gave up on finding him. He's alive today because Lisa and Debbie kept him talking instead of letting the shock and hypothermia take over.

He's alive today because officers continued to look when they had very little to go on.

And he's alive today because paramedics were in the area on standby and were able to get to him quickly.

Police Dispatcher Lisa Huey and Fire Dispatcher Debbie Edwards went way beyond the call of duty. Their dedication and perseverance are major factors in why Eric Sakeria is alive today. They worked together and with co-workers as a team to accomplish the mission. How differently this could have ended.

Both Debbie Edwards and Lisa Huey received employee-of-the-month awards for the month of May.

Sakeria's leg was reattached successfully at Vanderbilt Hospital in Nashville. He was transferred from there to Blanchfield Army Hospital at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He later was transferred to the hospital at Tripler Army Base in Hawaii. His leg is still in a cast, but now he is able to do light duty work.

About the Author

Lynn M. Casey, ENP, is emergency communications supervisor with the Metro Nashville (Tennessee) Police Department, where she has worked 22 years.

She is a member of the Tennessee Chapter of APCO International and serves as the chair of its training committee.

Lynn is a member of the NENA Standards/Accreditation Committee and webmaster for the Tennessee NENA Chapter (www.geocities.com/heartland/meadows/1911/), the Tennessee Fireman's Association (www.geocities.com/heartland/ranch/1911/) and the Jason Foundation, Inc. (www.jasonfoundation.com).

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46TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

The Associated Press

January 11, 1997, Saturday, AM cycle

SECTION: Domestic News

LENGTH: 437 words

HEADLINE: Rescuers pinpoint location of stranded woman

BYLINE: By PAUL SLOCA, Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: SIOUX FALLS, S.D.

BODY:

A woman who slid into a ditch in a blizzard and was stranded nearly 40 hours in her pickup was rescued late Friday by snowmobilers after searchers picked up a signal from her cellular telephone.

"She's in good spirits and is warm, but is tired and cold," said Max Tite, the general manager of a Watertown cellular phone company that had been working to find Karen Nelson, 51, since she slid off the road Thursday morning.

Authorities brought in F-16 jets equipped with heat-sensing equipment to help in the search. They passed over Mrs. Nelson at least three times before they were able to find her cell phone signal, Tite said.

Rescuers wrapped her in a heavy blanket, put her on a sled and took her to an ambulance, which was en route to a Webster hospital late Friday.

Nelson had called police with her cellular phone after she got stuck trying to get home to Webster from her job in Roslyn, 12 miles away, Thursday morning.

At one point Friday, officials thought her car battery, which was running the phone, had gone dead after they temporarily lost the signal. But Tite said the battery was still functioning and contact was re-established.

Gov. Bill Janklow remained in contact with rescuers Friday.

Wind chills in many parts of the state have fallen to more than 70 degrees below zero. The storm is expected to last through the weekend. Almost the entire interstate highway system has been closed in South Dakota. Authorities recommend no travel.

Police were in contact with Mrs. Nelson every half hour Thursday night. But she was told to restrict her phone use Friday to preserve the battery.

Earlier, law enforcement officials and volunteers formed a convoy that included snowmobiles, plows and an ambulance to try to get to the spot where they believed Mrs. Nelson was stranded.

Mrs. Nelson had a sleeping bag, coats and a blanket but had been without heat since 4 p.m. Thursday.

Sheriff Doug Nelson, who is not related to the woman, said the situation should make it clear that traveling anywhere is simply a bad idea.

"When we say no travel advised, this is the reason. What the family is going through, what the searchers are going through, what the victim is going through. I just can't believe that anything is that important that you can't heed that warning," he said.

There have been several reports of missing people throughout the state.

One person has died because of the storm. An unidentified Wakpala woman died Thursday after her pickup was found stuck in snow drifts on the Standing Rock Reservation.

The Standing Rock Reservation straddles the border between the Dakotas.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: January 11, 1997